

GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT AGRICULTURE:

An Introduction To The Action Plan

Delivered To Governor Phil Scott: November 15, 2021

Editor's note: What follows is an excerpt from the Action Plan report. Please visit the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets [website](#) to read the full report.

Vermont agriculture is about more than growing food. Farms and farmers are central to Vermont’s identity and character. Without open working lands, rolling pastures, and miles and miles of diverse recreational trails, Vermont just wouldn’t be Vermont — for its residents or visitors. To keep

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The future of Vermont agriculture will and must look different from its present, and the state’s ability to navigate this transition effectively will have enormous implications for its landscape, economy, and way of life.
.....

our state healthy and vibrant, we need to nourish agriculture and strengthen its steady beat throughout the state. It is not a foregone conclusion that a cold-weather, mountainous, and heavily forested state will remain a robust agricultural producer or that our rural communities will thrive. If we value what we have, it is essential that Vermont remains a state of and for farmers.

Despite its importance, Vermont agriculture is at a critical moment of promise and peril. The state’s dairy

sector, the foundation of its agricultural economy, is under threat from a confluence of factors mostly outside the state’s control. Dairy’s vulnerability underscores the extent to which the success of Vermont farms and farmers depends on larger market forces. Simultaneously, the Covid pandemic revealed the importance and fragility of local and regional food systems, as the state experienced record levels of food insecurity and national supply chains broke down from 2020



into 2021. Despite these challenges, local farms and food businesses stepped up to keep shelves stocked, communities fed, and local markets operating.

These immediate crises are taking place in the context of significant long-term challenges to the sector and the state’s agricultural land base. These include an aging cohort of farmers reaching retirement without a succession plan; economic drivers that encourage converting agriculture

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Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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Vermont Legislature to Consider Strengthening Farm and Food Systems

When the pandemic arrived on our doorstep, life changed profoundly. Our daily routine was disrupted, from home to school, office to farm. We even had to learn how to play differently. We also found that our food system was fragile.

We experienced the vulnerability of our national approach to feeding Americans. Supply chain issues caused shelves to empty in many supermarkets; fortunately, many Vermonters were able to turn to local farmers or producers. Farmstands, farmers markets, home

delivery, community supported agriculture and a robust local food network grew to be even more important sources of food, throughout the year.

It is now time to build upon those lessons, to prioritize strengthening Vermont's farm- and food-based economy. The Governor's FY23 budget proposes that the Legislature fund initiatives to grow our food system and protect the most vulnerable. Many of these needs were outlined by the Governor's Commission on the Future of Agriculture, a group of citizens tasked to work with the Agencies of Agriculture and Commerce to ensure the viability and adaptability of Vermont's agriculture and food system. Over the next few weeks, the Vermont Legislature will consider major issues effecting agriculture in Vermont. At the same time, a landslide of federal funding has created once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to affect change.

Workers are key to providing food to homes, restaurants, schools, and institutions. We have heard from many in the food system that there is a tremendous need for help. The Governor has proposed investing \$140 million dollars in workforce development to help our farms and food companies attract and retain employees.

Continued support for the Capital Investment Program will make food production more affordable while growing our farm economy. The Governor's Commission on the Future of Agriculture highlighted the need for better infrastructure so farmers could access more and bigger markets. The Governor has proposed investing \$50 million dollars in "transformational projects" that will provide communities with the opportunity to attract and retain food businesses, while creating jobs and providing more local food.

The Working Lands program is

a long-standing investment that is performing well, and Governor Scott has proposed doubling the budget so Vermonters who make their living off the land can make critical investments to enable them to provide local food or products.

Covid-19 has also forced many businesses to take on more debt. Under the Governor's budget a Business Assistance Program would be created. This funding will be used to create a short-term forgivable loan program for working capital and operational needs. This solution will help fill in the gaps for food producers and farmers so they can produce food for our communities without interruption.

We also must protect those who are in need. Under the Governor's proposal, \$1.5 million dollars would go to Vermonters Feeding Vermonters, a program of the Vermont Foodbank focused on expanding access to local food to low-income Vermonters while supporting local farmers.

This commitment to feeding Vermonters also extends \$200,000 to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont for food security and farm viability programs.

The Governor's proposed budget also includes dollars to define the evolving Vermont brand. Vermonters produce some of the highest quality products in the country, and this effort would provide a fresh foundation to market and grow our farm and food economy.

The pandemic has exposed the fragility of the country's food system. We cannot depend on faraway places to feed us. All the proposals at hand help hard working Vermonters by making it more affordable to access the food we need to live, work, eat and play in the Green Mountain State. Vermont's story is strong, but it needs support. Now is the time to capitalize and transform Agriculture. Investing in agriculture improves the economy of rural Vermont, makes our state more livable, and provides nutritious food for all Vermonters.

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This Month's Recipe

Slow Cooker Pot Roast

From [tasty.co](https://www.tasty.co). Serve over egg noodles or rice if you wish.

Ingredients

- 3 lb chuck roast
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 oz dried onion soup mix
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 gold potatoes, diced
- 3 large carrots, chopped
- ½ cup water

Instructions

1. Place the chuck roast in a 7-quart (6 ½ liters) slow cooker and season with salt and pepper.
2. Sprinkle the onion soup pack and top with vegetables and water.
3. Cook on low for 8 hours, or high for 4-5 hours.
4. Enjoy!

Vermont Recognizes National Weights and Measures Week: March 1-7, 2022

By Marc Paquette, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

State and local jurisdictions throughout the country are celebrating Weights and Measures Week which takes place the first seven days of March every year. The date for Weights and Measures Week commemorates the signing of the first United States weights and measures law by President John Adams on March 2, 1799. The evolution of a uniform system of weights and measures has had a profound and necessary impact on society and government. It provides uniformity and confidence in the marketplace for both consumers and businesses. All participants in an economy are more likely to engage openly in trade if they are assured of fairness in transactions. Weights and Measures programs contribute greatly to economic development by promoting equity in the marketplace to all stakeholders.

The Weights & Measures (W&M) program is part of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. State inspectors work diligently to ensure accurate and correct devices are used for sales of goods and services to consumers. Staff inspect and test all types of scales, gas station pumps, meters on both oil and propane trucks, packages, and conduct price verification inspections (scanners) in grocery stores. The program also maintains a National Institute of Standards & Technology recognized calibration laboratory.

This year we would like to highlight some of the work the W&M Metrology



Maple syrup hydrometer in testing solution.

Laboratory does to maintain accurate instruments for the maple syrup industry. Hydrometers are instruments used for measuring the density of liquids. When used in the production of maple syrup or sale of sap it measures the sugar content in the liquid. All maple syrup

hydrometers sold in Vermont and used in the production of syrup and all sap hydrometers used to derive a selling price for sap are required by Vermont Maple Law & Regulation to be tested and approved by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. To comply with this requirement the W&M Metrology Laboratory provides testing to ensure that these hydrometers are within legally prescribed tolerances, ensuring that maple syrup meets the highest standards nation-wide for density and that sap hydrometers determine an accurate sugar content to ensure equity between the buyers and sellers of maple sap.

The lab tests hydrometers manufactured in multiple states and several foreign countries. Distributors of maple hydrometers are located throughout the maple producing regions of North America. Hydrometers have been submitted by distributors for testing from many states including New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin,

Indiana, Connecticut, and Michigan. Vermont maple producers may submit their previously used hydrometers to the lab for tolerance testing to confirm they are still accurate for use.

The number of hydrometers tested by the lab attest to the vibrant North American maple industry, as the submissions for testing from multiple state distributors highlight the continued leadership role the state of Vermont plays in this expanding and dynamic marketplace. Recent numbers of hydrometers tested include: 8,832 in 2021, 7,459 in 2020, and 8,568 in 2019. Over the last decade the Vermont lab has tolerance tested approximately 85,000 syrup and sap hydrometers.

A short YouTube clip on the Agency's role in hydrometer testing can be at the following site: <https://youtu.be/GjpfddO1nKo>.

Weights & Measures programs exist world-wide with some regional regulations based on local economies and products produced. Weights and Measures Week serves as a reminder of the great value consumers receive from these programs. These programs impact businesses, consumers, and both local and international economies.

The next time you purchase maple syrup, gasoline, take a trip to the grocery store, or receive a delivery of fuel at your home, remember that the Weights and Measures Program is working to ensure accuracy, fairness, and consumer protection in the marketplace.

For more information about the Agency of Agriculture's Weights and Measures program, contact Marc Paquette, Weights and Measures Chief, by email marc.paquette@vermont.gov or by phone, 802-828-2426.



Hundreds of maple syrup hydrometers ready for testing.

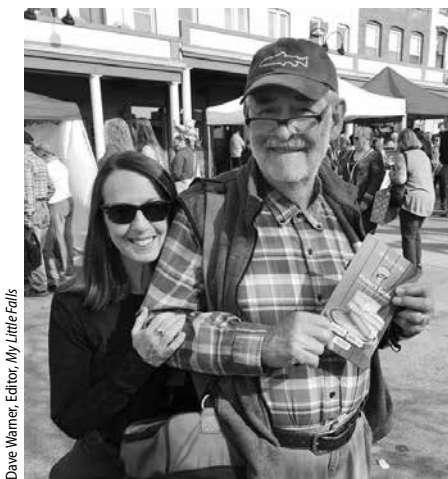
DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant Open Now

A total of \$175,000 is available for awards ranging \$10,000 – \$25,000

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food
& Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is now accepting applications through the Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant Program. This funding will support the development and promotion of agritourism activities designed to raise awareness and consumption of regionally produced dairy products in order to elevate regional dairy businesses. Dairy producers, processors, and producer associations in Vermont and the greater Northeast region are eligible to apply.



Dave Warner, Editor, My Little Falls

Eventgoers enjoy the Little Falls Cheese Festival in October 2021

Agritourism activities can include tours, workshops, special events, and more. It's all about finding creative ways for producers to connect with their communities, visitors, and customers!

For example,

cheesemakers in Central New York (CNY) have teamed up to organize an annual festival celebrating regional cheesemakers as well as other gourmet food and beverage producers. Cheesemakers also launched the CNY Cheese Trail to invite visitors and potential buyers to connect directly with where the cheese is made. In 2021, a NE-DBIC Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant bolstered these volunteer-run initiatives with \$15,000 in funds to promote the festival and trail through a professional marketing campaign. As a result, the festival saw a 30% increase in attendance, with most vendors selling out. In

addition, most CNY Cheese Trail members reported a range of 20-30% increase in traffic and sales.

To be eligible for grant funds, projects must actively engage a minimum of three Northeast dairy farmers or processors in the grant's agritourism activities and must promote awareness and consumption of regionally produced dairy products.

Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$25,000 with

a 25% cash or in-kind match requirement. A total of \$175,000 in funds is available in this grant round. Applications are due April 7, 2022.

To learn more, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities/multi-business-dairy-agritourism-grant

Questions? Contact Kathryn Donovan at kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov or 802-522-7642.

Last Call: Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant

By Ollie Cultrara, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Pre-applications for the Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant Program from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) are due March 17, 2022. This funding will support modernized dairy product packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability with awards ranging \$75,000 to \$350,000. Eligible applicants include Northeast dairy processors and producer associations as well as packaging manufacturers, Northeast supply chain businesses (distributors, aggregators, retailers, etc.), and educational/research institutions that partner with at least one Northeast dairy processor or producer association.

Learn more at agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities/dairy-product-packaging-innovation-grant



Darby D'Angelo, Intern, Oneida County Tourism

Visitors enjoy products from dairy businesses on the Central NY Cheese Trail.

Seeking Service Providers for Grazing, Forage, and Alternative Farm Management Technical Assistance Cohorts

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) seeks multiple technical assistance (TA) providers to offer cohort-based TA for dairy farmers considering transitioning their farm to a grass-based production model, enhancing the production of home-grown forages, and/or utilizing alternative farm management strategies not typically found in the U.S. dairy sector.

Service providers will

recruit localized cohorts of at least five Northeast dairy farms to participate in on-farm group and individual business and technical assistance over 18-24 months. Once a farmer has developed a plan with the TA provider, they will be eligible to apply for grant funds to help implement and sustain farm management improvements.

This is the fourth round of cohort-based TA contracts through NE-DBIC with cohorts already underway in five states. This round will prioritize development of several cohorts to directly serve dairy farmers on one or

more of the following topics:

- **Increased Grazing Quality or Quantity:** Helping farmers move along the continuum of grazing, improving quality and/or quantity of grass-based herd and pasture management through forage health, herd nutritional needs, and supplies. Participating farms can be conventional or organic and of any scale; farms are not required to adopt 100% forage-based systems.
- **Home-Grown Forage Enhancement:** Supporting

farmers in increasing their homegrown forage capacity. TA can address topics such as pasture management, forage quality, storage conditions, and nutrition.

- **Alternative Farm Management:** Expanding training on subjects outside the realm of standard U.S. dairy operations. Topics of particular interest to NE-DBIC include seasonal and/or alternative milking schedules, transitioning tie-stall barns into freestalls or bedded pack facilities

while retaining access to pasture, sharemilking/alternative ownership and management structures, and group housing for calf-rearing.

A total of \$500,000 in funding is available for several project contracts ranging from \$75,000 - \$150,000.

Proposals will be accepted until March 29, 2022 at 4:30 PM ET. For more information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/transition-grazing-cohort-ta-contract. Questions? Email kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov by March 8, 2022 at 4:30 PM.

Dairy Farmers Invited on Grazing Learning Trip to Missouri

By Ollie Cultrara, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Looking to increase or improve grazing for your dairy herd? Farmers and technical assistance providers are invited to travel with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center to Missouri for three days of field-based grazing education in mid-May.

Learn from experienced farmers about their own transitions to innovative grass-based production systems and a variety of business models common to New Zealand. NE-DBIC will provide lodging and reimburse farmers for up to \$1,000 of travel and other related costs. Interested in coming? Contact Kathryn Donovan at kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov or 802-522-7642.



FDA Proposed Changes to Agricultural Water Requirements for Produce Farms

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently issued a proposed rule that revises the pre-harvest agricultural water requirements in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. Pre-harvest agricultural water is water that directly contacts produce during growing, such as water for irrigation. If finalized, the proposed rule would replace pre-harvest water testing and microbial quality criteria with requirements for systems-based pre-harvest agricultural water assessments. The requirements would apply to pre-harvest agricultural water used for covered produce (other than sprouts) on farms covered by the Produce Safety Rule. FDA invites public comments on the rule until April 5, 2022. For more information, visit go.usa.gov/xtEre (case-sensitive) or contact Tucker Diego at Tucker.Diego@vermont.gov or (802) 622-4412.

VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030:

Beer

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

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What's At Stake?

In 2019, Vermont's 68 breweries had \$366 million in economic impact. Vermont brewers capture international accolades and are a powerful force for Vermont's food reputation, attracting consumers to Vermont-made beers and to the state itself for brewery tourism. In 2015, an estimated 1.2 million out-of-state brewery visits generated \$50 million in non-bar/restaurant expenditures. Vermont brewers often highlight selected local ingredients in specialty brews and/or regularly source local ingredients, although there is room for growing these collaborations to the benefit of both breweries and farmers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. craft beer industry was



experiencing saturation and declining demand. Vermont breweries were not exempt from that trend, and necessary pandemic restrictions are now threatening the survival of Vermont breweries of all sizes. Many breweries are creatively revisiting their business models, packaging, distribution, and marketing and sales strategy.

Current Conditions

Breweries play a vital role in the Vermont food system, impacting agriculture, tourism, the service economy, transportation and storage, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. In 2019, there were 68 breweries in Vermont, employing 2,969 people and producing beer for national distribution, local brew pubs, and the hospitality industry. Breweries are supporting the economic development of cities and towns by drawing considerable numbers of people to Vermont who spend in the surrounding community. In some cases, lack of adequate municipal infrastructure is restricting potential brewery development.

Vermont brewers have increasingly integrated local

agricultural products as they have become available and as consumer demand for local products has risen. Some brewers are using Vermont barley and wheat malted in-state, as well as Vermont hops, maple syrup, berries, apples, grapes and more (see *Hops brief*, *Food- Grade Grains brief*). Barriers to integrating more farm products into a brewery supply chain can include lack of infrastructure and potential variability in quality and consistency of these agricultural products, as well as a brewery's business model.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,

the Division of Liquor Control (DLC) permitted curbside pickup and delivery under the State of Emergency, which enabled breweries without extensive bottling and distribution infrastructure to remain in business. While the brewing industry has historically relied heavily on tourism dollars, local support during the pandemic illustrates that tourists are not the only ones supporting Vermont beer. That said, without the return of pre-pandemic levels of tourism, or some other form of economic relief, the brewing industry will see closures and a contraction in growth.

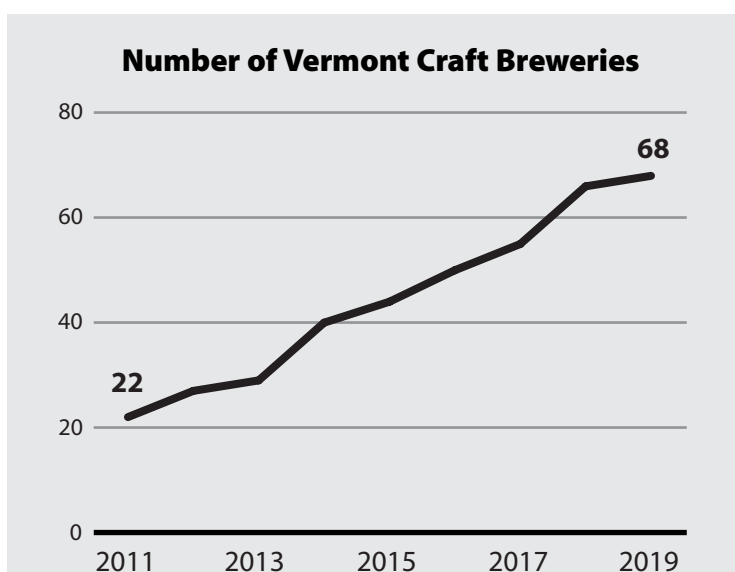
Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Managing the high biological oxygen demand (BOD) wastewater from breweries within the constraints of current town infrastructure and funding is a challenge for towns and breweries, affecting the growth of those breweries.
- The current permit and tax reporting requirements for Vermont breweries are a burden and include property taxes, 18 different monthly, quarterly, and yearly business taxes, and six different permits/licenses.
- The establishment and success of Vermont farm businesses which could provide beer inputs is constrained by a lack of infrastructure. This includes insufficient grain storage, malt and hops processing equipment and facilities, along with research and distribution infrastructure.
- Alcohol abuse is the third leading preventable cause of death in the US, causing approximately 360 deaths in Vermont annually. Alcohol abuse impacts the state as a whole as well as the brewery workforce, with state government contributing millions of dollars each year to prevention, education, and treatment.

Opportunities

- There is tremendous beer knowledge and innovation in Vermont, including UVM Extension staff and other technical advisors,

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A Look at *Listeria*

Understanding pathogens of concern for fruit and vegetable farms

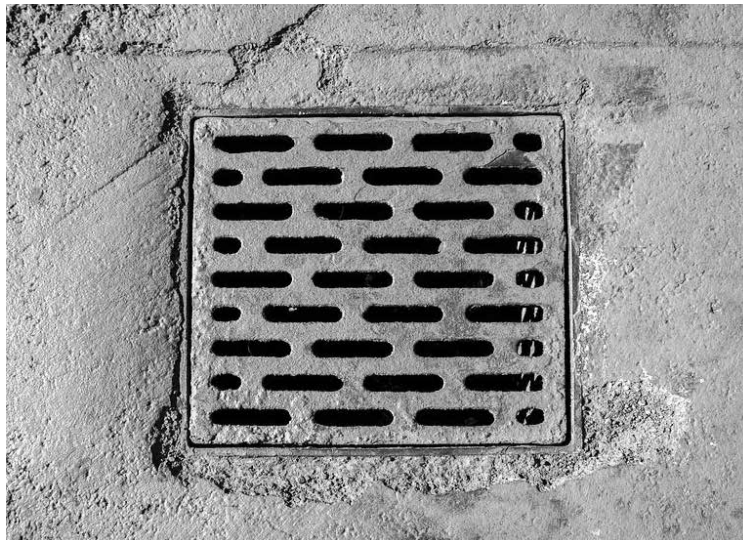
By Ollie Cultrara, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

What does the phrase “produce safety” make you think of? You may have heard about foodborne illness outbreaks, such as the recent outbreaks of *E. coli* linked to baby spinach or *Salmonella* linked to onions. Because many fruits and vegetables are often eaten raw, we can’t rely on cooking to kill any harmful bacteria, viruses, or parasites that may be hitching a ride on our produce. Here in the Agency’s Produce Program, when we say “produce safety,” we mean taking steps to keep fresh fruits and vegetables from becoming contaminated with pathogens that can get people sick.

Understanding the pathogens we’re most concerned about—where they come from, what they need to thrive, and how they spread—is critical to preventing contamination. Let’s look at one species of bacteria that can cause particularly severe foodborne illness: *Listeria monocytogenes*.

What’s at stake

Listeria monocytogenes bacteria can cause a serious infection called listeriosis, especially in newborns, older adults, and people who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems. The U.S. averages about 1,600 diagnosed cases of listeriosis annually. While *Listeria* infection is less common



Listeria monocytogenes bacteria can thrive in cool, wet places, such as floor drains.

than *E. coli* or *Salmonella* infections, listeriosis is one of the leading causes of death from foodborne illness. Symptoms of severe infection can include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. Most people with severe listeriosis require hospitalization, and about one in five people with invasive listeriosis die. When the infection occurs during pregnancy, it can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, or newborn death.

Where *Listeria* thrives

Bacteria need nutrients, moisture, and the right temperatures to grow and divide. *Listeria* species (including *L. monocytogenes*) are widely present in the environment, including reservoirs such as ruminant animals, soil, decaying animals and plant material, and other moist environments. *Listeria* species are hardy and can continue to grow and divide at a wide range of temperatures, including below 33°F, unlike

many other microorganisms which multiply more slowly in cold temperatures. This means that *Listeria* can out-compete other organisms that do not thrive in refrigeration conditions.

Because of these characteristics, we are most concerned about preventing *L. monocytogenes* from becoming established in facilities, cold storage, HVAC equipment, floor drains, or equipment that may be difficult to clean. In areas and equipment used for handling produce, spaces where water and organic debris collect are important to clean regularly to avoid allowing microorganisms to build up and establish biofilms in these “harborage points.” Biofilms are communities of bacteria attached to surfaces which are protected by a matrix of glue-like molecules secreted by the bacteria. Once established, biofilms make bacteria very difficult to remove completely.

Reducing risks

Farms are biodiverse environments where both beneficial and potentially harmful microorganisms are present, but microbial risks can be managed. Good agricultural practices that reduce the risk of produce becoming contaminated with *L. monocytogenes* include:

- Routinely cleaning, and when appropriate, sanitizing, all food contact surfaces.
- Protecting produce from condensate and drips, such as from cooler ceilings, overhead pipes, and cooling units.
- Periodic deep cleaning of non-food contact surfaces, like floors, walls, and drains, scrubbing with a detergent to break up biofilms and prevent buildup of organic matter and microorganisms.
- Allowing surfaces to dry between uses whenever possible.
- Avoiding use of high-pressure water while cleaning to prevent backsplash or aerosolization, which can transfer bacteria from dirty surfaces to clean surfaces. Never use high pressure water to clean floor drains for this reason.

Next steps

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) is a federal regulation that aims to prevent foodborne illnesses related to fresh fruits and vegetables. The PSR sets a science-based, national standard for safely growing, harvesting, packing and holding

produce on farms. The Rule focuses on microbial contamination risks – conditions that could spread harmful pathogens to produce.

Whether or not your farm is subject to inspection under the PSR, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture’s Produce Program can help you implement practices to protect food safety on your farm. Contact the Vermont Produce Program at AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov, (802) 461-5128. For more information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram.

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Future of Ag

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land to development; financial barriers to entry for would-be agricultural entrepreneurs; tight profit margins across the industry; limited public understanding of the sector's role in supporting communities, the economy, and the environment; a lack of racial diversity within the state overall and the agricultural sector in particular; and long-term threats to the state's natural and working lands posed by climate change, water pollution, and degraded soil health.

These challenges underscore the urgent need for the sector to continue to adapt. The future of Vermont agriculture will and must look different from its present, and the state's ability to navigate this transition effectively will have enormous implications for its landscape, economy, and way of life.

Fortunately, the members of the Commission are optimistic for multiple reasons. First and foremost are the state's farmers themselves: hard working, resilient, welcoming, innovative, and invested in pathways to success, with a wealth of technical knowledge and experience.

Generations ago, Vermont

farmers navigated an enormous economic transition, as dairy replaced the state's once-thriving sheep industry in the early 20th century. The Commission is confident farmers will meet present-day challenges with similar resolve. Vermont farmers are currently advancing one of the most sophisticated Farm to Plate efforts in the country, involving a diverse network of stakeholders selling an expanding and evolving suite of products through every market channel available, from farmers' markets to CSAs, restaurants, and retail and institutional outlets across the Northeast. They are exploring new value-added products like artisan cheese and reinventing older ones like grass-fed beef. With appropriate supports, there is good reason to believe they will successfully navigate today's threats to dairy and agricultural lands overall.

Vermont has a wealth of resources that will help the sector to adapt: a strong cultural history



and collective identity connected to agriculture and the land, valued by both residents and visitors to the state; geographic proximity to large retail and tourist markets in the Northeast; high-quality and award-winning agricultural producers; a strong brand identity and reputation for producing authentic, sustainable, and high-quality local products; a largely intact supply chain infrastructure that provides access to parts, supplies and equipment; excellent support systems available through the state, nonprofit organizations, and technical service providers; and a new Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan 2021-2030 that stakeholders have already begun implementing.

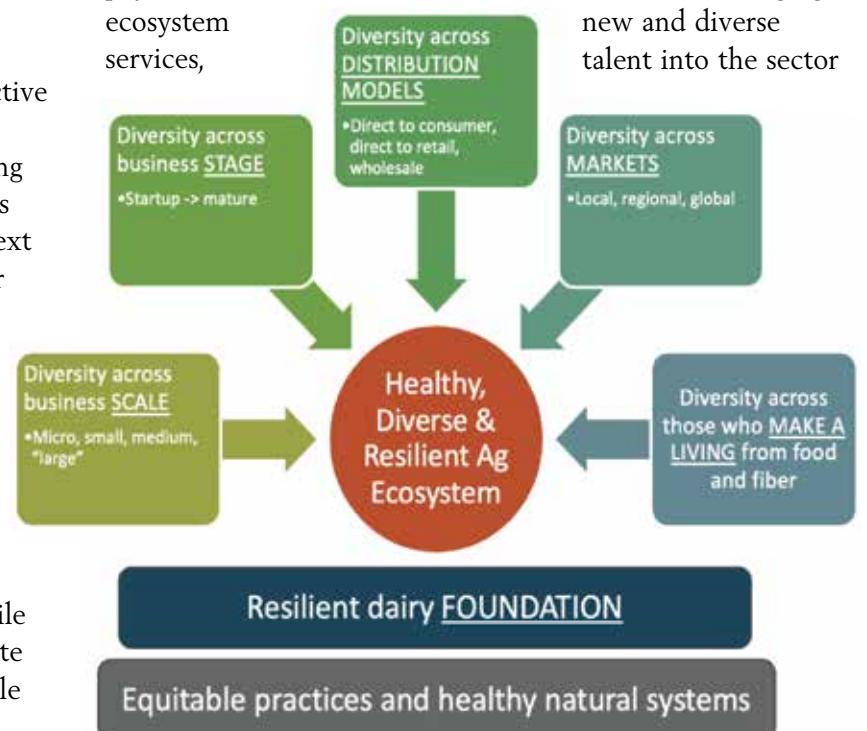
With the right collective strategy and a robust commitment to investing in appropriate programs and policies over the next ten years, the future for Vermont agriculture will be bright. In this future, Vermont will fuel opportunities for farmers and food producers across a diverse range of enterprises to innovate and grow. While dairy's share of farm gate sales may remain volatile or decrease overall, the

strategy will focus on maintaining a strong agricultural base in dairy. This focus will be crucial to ensuring that dairy can continue its role supporting infrastructure across the sector, maintaining a working landscape, and to retaining the valuable talents, skills, and knowledge of existing farmers. Vermont will help dairy farmers identify the assets they need to compete at the national level over the long-term and continue to explore value-added opportunities, and will help farmers without these assets transition into alternative, profitable agricultural production. Meanwhile, Vermont will bolster production of maple, meat, produce, value added products, and other agricultural goods, with strong supports in place to enable new and diverse types of farming and farm businesses.

Effective state-level policies and programs will support increased margins and efficiencies and additional revenue streams across all industry sectors. These will include new payments for ecosystem services,

support for the development and deployment of new scale-appropriate agriculture technologies and climate-smart practices, a strengthened Current Use tax program, a streamlined regulatory process, and expanded access to capital. The state's robust technical assistance programs will receive an infusion of funding and expertise, allowing them to better support a wide range of farms and farm businesses regardless of their size, stage of development, or target markets. Investments in strategic infrastructure, including storage, distribution, and the meat processing and waste industry, will unlock opportunities for entrepreneurial farmers to succeed using new business models and to market and sell new farm products. These investments in scaling food production will pay enormous dividends for the state, resulting in an estimated \$50 million in annual local food sales by 2025 if Vermont reaches its current procurement targets.

Vermont will and must do better at bringing new and diverse talent into the sector



and attracting more Vermonters who want to live and work here. Dedicated supports for new farmers, including down payment assistance, increased financing options for farm enterprises at various stages of development, and improved mentorship, education, and training opportunities will lower financial barriers to entry, support generational transfers of farmland, attract new entrepreneurs and workers, and inject new dynamism into the sector.

A renewed focus on racial equity across all strategies will increase diversity across race and class and enhance Vermont's reputation as a state that is just and welcoming to all.

Vermont will also redouble its efforts to connect Vermonters to their local food system, improving the public's experience of the benefits of healthy local food and a thriving agricultural economy, and improving food security for the most vulnerable Vermonters. To support these efforts, Vermont will invest in a strategic branding initiative. The initiative will solidify the state's reputation as a source of high-quality, sustainable, and community-oriented agricultural products; increase margins and profitability; and help attract new Vermont citizens excited about participating in the state's dynamic agricultural economy.

Overall, the sustaining of a competitive and resilient dairy foundation will support and enable



soils, clean water and regenerative natural systems will further buttress the system overall. As depicted in the graphic to the right, the result of all these efforts will be a healthy, diverse, and resilient agricultural ecosystem.

Commission Co-Chair Secretary Kurrle noted, "The

Commission's overarching mission is to help ensure that Vermont remains a vibrant agricultural state. It found that while Vermont agriculture is resilient, it needs attention and care."

Secretary Tebbetts added, "The Commission reiterated that investment in a robust agricultural sector is essential to supporting Vermont's residents, building its rural economy, employing its citizens, drawing visitors, and maintaining Vermont's unique character and beauty."

Moving forward, the Commission will engage the Legislature and all Vermonters on strategies to realize Vermont's goals. Click [here](#) to read the full report.

innovation and growth across a wider range of sub-sectors, from maple to produce to meat, grains, hops, honey, cheese and more. Rather than there being a single "model" for the successful Vermont farm, the sector will be dynamic and innovative, with a diversity of agricultural enterprises by scale (micro, small, medium, and large), development stage (from startup to mid-stage to mature), distribution model (direct to consumer, direct to retail, and wholesale) and target market (local, regional, and global). A focus on promoting diversity among those who make a living from food and fiber, equitable access to land and capital, and healthy

Governor's Commission On The Future Of Vermont Agriculture

Kate Finley Woodruff, UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

David M. Roth, The Wakaya Group

Harold Howrigan, Howrigan Family Farms

Jed Davis, Cabot Creamery Cooperative

Ellen Kahler, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Nick Richardson, Vermont Land Trust

David Mance, Jr., Mance Family Tree Farm

Steven Schubart, Grass Cattle Company

Annie Myers, Myers Produce

Mieko Ozeki, Vermont Farmers Market Association

Josh Poulin, Poulin Grain Inc.

Leslie McCrorey-Wells, Pizzeria Verita, Trattoria Delia, and Sotto Enoteca restaurants owner

Commission Initiatives and the Governor's Proposed Budget

The overarching 2021 Future of Agriculture Commission Plan priorities include a commitment to these four themes:

- All Vermonters benefit from healthy nutritious food and a robust local food system
- Vermont fuels agricultural business entrepreneurship, growth, and sustainability, so that food producers and businesses are profitable across a range of sizes, stages, and business models
- Vermont attracts and supports the next generation of farmers
- Vermont strengthens and supports its brand

Key strategies and goals from the 2021 Future of Vermont Agriculture Commission Plan in the Governor's FY23 proposed budget:

\$200,000 for NOFA-VT food security and farm viability programs

\$1.5M to Vermont Foodbank's Vermonters Feeding Vermonters local food assistance program

\$675,000 to support the K-12 school's Local Food Incentive Program (school grants and position) at Agency of Education

\$50M to ACCD's Capital Investment Grant program for infrastructure projects

\$20M to ACCD for establishing the Business Assistance Program offering forgivable loans

Increase annual base allocation for the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative by \$406,000 (making new base \$1M annually) at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM)

\$1M to support ongoing Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group, including research and pilot program funding

\$5M to support AAFM to expand agronomic practices and program support to focus on climate change mitigation

\$100,000 to AAFM to conduct a Vermont brand assessment with goal of further increasing awareness of our state's unique brand.

Visit the Future of Vermont Agriculture Commission [webpage](#) to learn more about the Commission and to download the 2021 Plan and other materials.

Best Management Practices Program Applications Due April 1

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency
of Agriculture, Food &
Markets

Applications to receive technical and financial assistance through the Agency of Agriculture's Best Management (BMP) Program are due April 1, 2022. While BMP applications can be submitted at any time, applications received prior to April 1 will be given priority consideration for assistance in 2022. Applications submitted after April 1 will be evaluated in the following calendar year. Submission of an application does not guarantee grant funding or assistance. Applicants will receive a response from the BMP program regarding their application status prior to July 2022.

The BMP Program provides assistance to farmers in the implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality.



caption



Practices eligible for BMP include:

- manure storage,
- composting stack pad,
- barnyard runoff collection,
- gutter/ditch clean water diversion,
- laneway development and stream crossings,
- exclusion fencing and watering facilities, and
- milk house waste collection and treatment.

Visit <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp> for information on the BMP Program or to find an application. If you have any questions, or to request a BMP application by mail, contact the Agency engineer who works in your area:

Franklin, Grand Isle
Andrew Mitchell:
(802) 505-5125, Andrew.Mitchell@vermont.gov

Mitchell@vermont.gov
Dillan Westcom:
(802) 522-6962, Dillan.Westcom@vermont.gov

Orleans, Essex
Jenn Lacy: (802) 505-5090,
Jennifer.Lacy@vermont.gov

Chittenden, Lamoille, Washington, Caledonia
Matt Gardner: (802) 622-4612, Matt.Gardner@vermont.gov

Addison, Rutland
Jason Bradley: (802) 461-3065, Jason.Bradley@vermont.gov
Rachel Seigel: (802) 661-8771, Rachel.Seigel@vermont.gov

Orange, Windsor, Windham, Bennington
Amer Suvalic: (802) 522-4305, Amer.Suvalic@vermont.gov

Fishing Regulations Simplification

By the Vermont Department of
Fish & Wildlife

Beginning January 1, 2022, the fishing regulations in Vermont will change considerably. We've worked with our biologists, warden service staff, fish and wildlife board, and the public to develop regulations that are

easier to understand while still providing protection for fish populations across Vermont.

Don't worry, most of the new regulations have been simplified and provide additional fishing opportunities. If you fish like you have in the past you will be legal, with a few exceptions.

Most waters now fall under general regulations with some exceptions. See the Index of Rivers and Streams and lakes and ponds in fishing guide or download the quick reference guide. For the full rule see Title 10 VSA, § 122

Some Highlights

- You can now fish year-

round using artificial lures and flies for almost any species in any water if you practice catch and release.

- In certain lakes and ponds, the winter harvest season for trout now starts January 1.
- You can now keep 8 trout from streams and rivers. This means 8 total fish of any combination of brook,

brown or rainbow trout.

- Many waters that were previously seasonally closed are now managed under general regulations.
- All these changes means that the number of regulation tables in the Fishing Guide has been reduced from 10 to 3.

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To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Agri.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Now boarding heifers and beef cattle! If labor's too hard to find or short on feed, let us board your animals. 300 lbs and up, minimum group size of 50; Excellent facilities and feed is mix of haylage and corn silage or straight haylage, your choice. References available upon request. Call 802-533-2984 (2)

Employment

Small, diversified farm looking for a herd manager. Milking 25 Jerseys – housing provided. Experience necessary open to various options. Wonderful opportunity for responsible energetic person or couple. Call for details 4 Corners Farm, Newbury VT 802-866-3342, kimmgray@gmail.com. (12)

Equipment

Ford L 8000 tandem dump truck 19ft rack. Hyd dump with tail gate, electric automatic crood tires and body. New batteries 213,000 miles, \$17,500. 802-265-4589 (11)

John Deere Harrows 10ft, 30ft hay elevator good shape, 24ft hay elevator, 2 furrow plows, 3 furrow plows, 285 Oliver spreader, 19-ton grain bin, 11 ton grain bin, 7 ft blade also I fix grain bin all over Vermont. 802-624-0143 or 802-895-4683 (11)

Wic Feed Cart 52. In excellent condition, only used for 11 months. For info and pics, call Harold McCoy 802 535 4756 or email labmanvt@gmail.com (2)

Bulk milk tank for sale: 1500 gal; DEC; excellent condition, \$8000 OBO.

Doda separator-with screens, excellent condition, used very little, \$20,000 OBO. Call 802-533-2984 (2)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Excellent quality first cut wrapped round bales; baleage. Shelburne VT Call Andy 802-598-6060. Analysis available upon request.

Organic haylage 12% protein \$45 per ton, 15% protein \$55 per ton. 802-537-2435

4x4 round balage mixed grains cut late June. \$30 802-325-3707

1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don Pettis, 802-265-4566.

Certified Organic First Cut Wrapped Round Bales for sale. Clover, Timothy and mixed grasses. Test samples and delivery available. Call Matt 802-558-3879.

Vetch & rye seeds for sale, mixed in 50 lb. bags, \$1/lb. certified by Vermont Organic Farmers. Thornhill Farm, 198 Taylor Road, Greensboro Bend, VT 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802.441.3176

2021 First cut \$4.00 at barn in Ryegate. Call Steve, 802-584-4450

Hay for sale: 1st cut organic round bales. Randolph Center. Call John at 522-8798

Certified organic first cut wrapped round bales for sale – cut by mid-June, good sized and well made. Asking \$50/each with 200 bales available. Beidler Family Farm, Randolph Center Contact: 802-728-5601 or brentbeidler@gmail.com.

Excellent quality first, second, and third cut wrapped round bales for sale. First cut by June 1, dry. \$50.00/bale Please call 802-454-7198

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984.

Dry 2nd Cut Hay for Sale 5' round bales, avg. 750 lbs, \$100/bale- Craftsbury, VT 802-624-0539

Certified organic 4x4 round bales for sale. First cut 45.00, second and third 55.00. 802-793-7526

Excellent quality wrapped round bales for sale. \$50/ bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198

1st Cut 4 x 4 Wrapped round bales \$45/bale Call Tom at 802-457-5834

1st, 2nd & 3rd cut round bales. 2nd cut square bales - \$6.00 per bale. Volume discount for square and round bales. Please call Chris, 802-272-0548.

Certified Organic wrapped round bales. Mid-summer first cut @ \$45/bale and 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/ bale loaded at the farm in N. Danville. All hay is tedded and raked and feeds out like dry hay. Definitely not frozen. Perfect for small as well as large ruminates. Email Vince at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461.

ADDISON COUNTY

1st cut 4x5 round bales never wet. Good horse & cow hay. 802-948-2627 or 802-558-0166

Certified organic, small square bales always stacked and stored under cover, 35-40lbs/ bale. \$4/bale, discounts available for large quantities. 802-989-0781 for inquiries.

Hay for Sale in Addison, VT. Large square bales and small squares. \$50-60 For large, \$3.50-4.50 for small. Delivery available. Call Jack 802-989-8968



Hay for sale. \$3.25 bale. 802-377-5455

1st cut 5ft diameter round bales. \$30-\$35 Orwell 802-948-2211

Straw for sale - \$7/bale for 50 or more. \$8/bale for less than 50, \$6/bale for all in the barn, approx. 350. from our winter rye harvest in August. certified organic. Thornhill Farm, Greensboro Bend, 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802-441-3176

Hay for sale, cows have been sold. 750 lb 4x5 round bales stored inside or tube wrapped. Bedding/Mulch \$35, Heifer/Beef \$40, Dairy \$55. I will load your truck. In Whiting, call 802-623-6584

Large organic round bales good heifer/dry cow hay \$45/bale call 802-948-2382 evenings

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Corn Silage 1000 ton plus. Haylage 500 ton plus. Round bales 4x4. Square bales small. 802-394-2976

CALEDONIA COUNTY

1st & 2nd Cut Alfalfa mix 600lb Wrapped Hay Baleage. For Questions, Prices and Orders call 802-375-5647

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

Round bales for horses. Clean first cut timothy mixed grass, quality net wrapped 4' X 5' bales. Never wet. \$45. each. 802-879-0391 Westford.

15 large 5x5 round bales mixed grass w/some timothy + clover 800+lbs \$50 ea. call 899-4126

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good Quality Hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard & orchard sweet grass 18 to 20% plus protein large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load on direct delivery by trailer load. Mountain View Dairy Farm 802-849-6266

Excellent 2021 1st cut hay wrapped round bales for sale. Call Wayne (802) 285-6383

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/ bale. Organic First Cut Hay. \$5.00/bale. Certified Organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge. 802-644-6598. valleydreamfarm@gmail.com.

ORLEANS COUNTY

Pure alfalfa for sale and also 1st, 2nd and 3rd cut big/ small squares, round bales, wrapped or unwrapped, straw and switch grass. Call Richard at 802-323-3275.

Organic Certified Silage for Sale: We will deliver from our farm or you can come and pick up. Call for prices and delivery charge. 1-802-744-2444 or 802-274-4934 or 802-744-6553.

North Troy: Good quality Certified organic large round bales, some dry and some wrapped and 9x200 ft ag bags fo haylage. Also conventional large round bales and 9x200ag bags of haylage. Delivery available 802-988-2959 or 802-274-2832

RUTLAND COUNTY

Good quality 1st and 2nd round bales available, wrapped and dried. Please call 802-446-2435.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

200-4x4 round bales 1st & 2nd cut \$45 each. 802-229-9871

Wrapped dry hay. Excellent quality never got wet. Perfect for horses or dairy. \$50/bale. No email. Please call 802-454-7198.

CLASSIFIEDS

WINDHAM COUNTY

1st cut hay. Good horse hay.
\$4.50 bale 802-254-5069

WINDSOR COUNTY

Hay for sale-400 square bales,
Reading, Windsor County
Vt. \$3.50 per bale at the

barn. Call 802-484-7240

4x5 dry round bales \$45.00
delivery available. 802-457-
1376

Rolling Meadows Farm: square
bales in the field or barn

\$4.00. Delivery can be
arranged at \$5.50. Very nice
hay from fertilized fields in
the South Woodstock and
Reading area. Call 802-484-
5540 or goodfarmvt@gmail.
com. Ask for David.

1st. cut dry round bales for
sale. Never been rained on,
stored under cover. \$50. @
1st. cut haylage bales for sale.
\$45. Rte. 5 Weathersfield
Bow 802 -546-4340.

Dry Round Horse Hay, \$50/
Bale. 200 Bales left. Call
802-356-5030.

Wanted

Patz 16-inch clockwise gutter
cleaner chain wanted. 802-
645-0865. (12)

Tree Stories Contest Call

By Gwen Kozlowski, UVM
Extension

Grade K – 8
students, including
homeschoolers,
are invited to share their
appreciation for forests
and trees by creating an

original story and artwork
for the Growing Works of
Art contest. The deadline to
enter is March 11.

The theme of this year's
contest is "Sharing your
TREE-mendous story."
Students are asked to
write a short story (one to

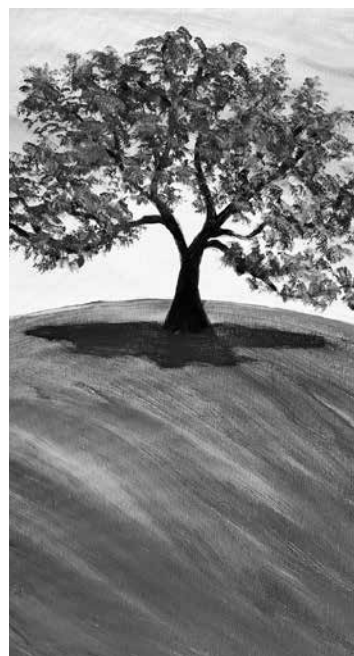
three paragraphs) about a
meaningful experience or
memory about trees, and
then create a work of art to
illustrate their story. Entries
will be judged on creativity
and originality (50 percent)
and how well the story is
told through writing and art
(50 percent).

All art must be original
and no larger than 11 x 17
inches. Any medium may be
used, including pen, pencil,
crayon, pastels, paint, cloth,
collage, photography or
computer-generated art.

Entries may be submitted
by mail or email but must
include the official entry
form, which can be found
at go.uvm.edu/growingart
along with contest rules
and submission guidelines.

Past winning entries also
are available to view on this
website.

The winner in each age
group will receive a Vermont
State Park punch pass and



will appear on Across the
Fence, UVM Extension's
weekday program on
WCAX-TV (if possible in
2022). Winning entries will
be announced on Vermont's
Arbor Day, which is May 6
this year, and will be
featured on the contest
website.

The contest is sponsored
annually by the Vermont
Urban and Community
Forestry Program, a
partnership between
University of Vermont
Extension and the Vermont
Department of Forests, Parks
and Recreation, as part of its
Arbor Day activities.

For more information,
contact Gwen Kozlowski at
gwen.kozlowski@uvm.edu or
(802) 651-8343, ext. 506.

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question,
please consult the list below. You are always welcome
to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our
best to route you to person most able to answer your
question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	828-2431
Animal Health	828-2421
Business Development.....	828-1619
Dairy	828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide. . .	828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime.....	828-5050
Licensing & Registration	828-2436
Meat Inspection	828-2426
Produce Program	461-5128
Vermont Agriculture & Environmental Lab..	585-6073
Water Quality BMP.....	828-3474
Water Quality Grants	622-4098
Water Quality Reports.....	272-0323
Weights & Measures	828-2433
Working Lands.....	622-4477

Initial Pesticide Certification Meeting

Review of the Northeast CORE Manual followed by
the Vermont Pesticide Applicator CORE Exam
This program will provide FOUR (4) Vermont recertification credits.

April 19: Armed Forces Reserve Center, White River Junction, VT

April 21: Robert Miller Community Center, Burlington, VT

Register at <https://go.uvm.edu/h26ce>

Visit www.uvm.edu/extension/psep for more information about the program
or contact Sarah Kingsley-Richards at (802) 656-0475 sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
EXTENSION



VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

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Working Lands Service Provider Grant Provides Resources to Strengthen Vermont's Forest Economy

By Clare Salerno, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Forests provide vital economic and recreational resources for Vermont, as well as serving as a key element of our state's identity. Despite its importance, the forest sector often lacks visibility among the public, and forest professionals have an ongoing need for updated and accessible continuing education resources.

Funded in part through a \$19,965 Working Lands Enterprise Fund's service provider grant in FY 2019, Vermont foresters looking to meet continuing education requirements have a new, free, and accessible online option thanks to UVM Extension's new On-Demand Forestry Webinar Library. The library launched just in time to provide a much-needed online resource for Vermont's foresters during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project leveraged additional funds from USDA Forest Service.

In addition to the webinar library, UVM Extension used Working Lands funds to produce a five-part podcast series called Heartwood: Stories from the Vermont Woods. Kate Forrer, UVM Extension community forestry specialist, and Lisa Sausville, Executive Director of Vermont Coverts, co-host the series.

"These innovative online tools meet several critical leverage points of the forest economy, including work-

force development, relationship building between different sectors along the value chain, and greater public awareness about the value of forestry and wood products industry to Vermont's rural economy," says Kate Forrer, who led both projects.

Since its creation, the On-Demand Forestry Webinar Library has provided 945 educational credits to Vermont foresters, far surpassing an initial goal of 100 credits. Over 170 foresters have used the online library and report over 1,160,130 acres of Vermont under improved management thanks to continuing education credits received.

Nearly all foresters that participated in webinars said that the library directly reduced costs for continuing education credits that are required to maintain a forester's license in Vermont. All participants identified the new library as an essential resource for meeting credit requirements. Online courses saved foresters valuable transportation time and provided a safe option during the pandemic. The library is available free of charge to the public at <http://www.ourvermontwoods.org/vtforestrywebinarlibrary>.

In addition to the webinar library, the Heartwood podcast provides an accessible way for everyone to learn about the importance of forestry and wood products to Vermont's people, history, and economy. Podcast episodes, which have been streamed over 1,000 times, feature an array

of perspectives, including landowners, forestry service providers, wood harvesters, processors, and retailers. Despite their unique stories and relationships to trees and forests, storytellers share a deep connection to the woods and are passionate about ensuring forest ecosystems and economies in Vermont continue to thrive.

"Trees and woodlands are important for many reasons -- they offer us materials that keep us safe and warm and a deep connection to the world outside our windows. Forests provide solace -- a place to escape from the chaos of our current world," observes co-host Lisa Sausville. Heartwood deliv-

ers a variety of information about resources available to landowners who may be wondering what the difference is between a consulting forester and a county forester and what services each provides. The podcast also offers information and stories for consumers of all kinds of forest products, from wood chips to mass timber to furniture. The podcast reminds Vermonters of the wealth both economic and spiritual that forests provide for us.

To listen, visit ourvermontwoods.org/heartwood. Anyone with a question about Vermont's forests or a story to share about a special tree or favorite woods is invited

to call the storyline, hosted by UVM Extension. The number is (802) 476-2272, ext. 210. Callers are asked to leave their name (include spelling), town of residence and a brief message (two minutes or less) outlining their question or story.

The mission of the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative is to strengthen and grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape. Funding opportunities will re-open in fall 2022 for businesses, producer associations, and service providers. Please visit workinglands.vermont.gov for more information.



Gabe Freitag, who owns and operates Central Vermont Logging and Forestry, LLC. Gabe is standing in front of hardwood saw logs on a job in Tunbridge, VT. He is one of the many small forestry businesses that obtains the required continuing education credits and knowledge to care for the health of Vermont's forests, through the On Demand Forestry Webinar Library.

Food System Plan

continued from page 6

- out-of-state specialists, research academics, and master brewers.
- Assisting towns with ongoing needed investments in their wastewater systems would remove barriers to growth for industrial users including breweries and assist with economic development as well as state water quality goals.
- The DLC's rapid shift to allow curbside pickup and delivery of beer during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that innovative changes in the liquor laws were not harmful to the public and greatly benefit the industry as a whole.

- Breweries are working together to reduce their environmental impacts related to carbon footprint, energy consumption, recycling, and water usage and treatment.
- With focused investment and technical assistance, there is potential for Vermont farms to reap the benefits of Vermont brewery success and to build a barley farming and malting industry in Vermont.

Recommendations

- DLC should continue flexibility in the rules governing the sale and consumption of alcohol and consider other improvements and simplifications

of distribution rules. Flexible rules, including those related to direct-to-consumer sales and outside consumption for on-premise establishments, will be critical to many breweries' survival.

- State and federal funds are needed to assist towns with improvements in their wastewater systems, to aid in economic development, assist in water quality efforts, and remove barriers to growth for commercial and industrial users including breweries. The state also could pass legislation that encourages towns and cities to require equitable governance structures during the consideration of water and wastewater

rate changes, engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process.

- Revise state excise taxes for simplicity, efficiency, and reduced burden on small businesses. Provide an exemption for small breweries to account for and pay to the State of Vermont the unclaimed \$0.05 deposits on containers collected at the point of sale. Managing redeemable containers is a real cost to Vermont's breweries that sell direct to customers.
- Reinvest alcohol tax dollars into the Vermont beer sector and related industries, as well as substance abuse programs. Some funds could go back directly to farmers producing hops and

grains, which would help level the playing field so they could produce at competitive prices. Other funds could support research, infrastructure development, the Vermont Brewers Association, and community-based and statewide substance abuse programs.

- Invest in infrastructure. For edible grain production to expand to meet the potential demand from Vermont breweries, there needs to be additional equipment and infrastructure in Vermont for growing and processing, strong regional markets, access to capital, and research-based technical assistance (see *Food-Grade Grains* brief).

Meet Deputy Director David Huber

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets welcomes David Huber to an exciting new chapter in his career with the Agency as the Deputy Director of the Public Health & Agricultural Resource Management Division (PHARM). Dave has been the Agency's Chief Policy Enforcement Officer for the past six years. In that capacity, Dave oversaw administrative enforcement for the Water Quality and PHARM Divisions. This involved working with Agency staff to identify and abate agricultural violations with the goal of keeping our state pollution-free and Vermonters safe.

Ensuring that farmers and businesses were on the path to compliance was key to this position, and Dave was able to successfully assist the Agency of Natural Resources and the Attorney General's Office when those entities had overlapping enforcement cases involving Vermont agriculture.

Dave moved to Vermont from Maryland in 2007 to pursue his passion for fishing and hiking, and also earned Master and Juris Doctor Degrees from Vermont Law School. Following school, Dave returned to Maryland to

practice with the Office of the Attorney General's Environmental Crimes Unit and then a small law firm

specializing in environmental issues.

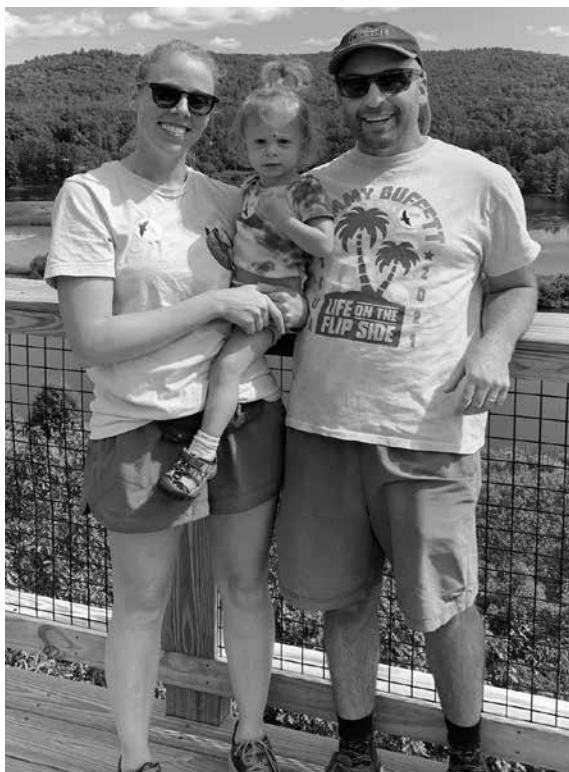
Missing the mountains and Vermont lifestyle, Dave

came back to the Green Mountains and worked for various state entities, including the Office of Legislative Counsel, Department of Labor, and ultimately the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. An avid scuba diver and big-game fly fisherman, protecting the environment has always been Dave's underlying goal and mission. This makes the transition from Enforcement to Deputy Director of PHARM a natural

progression for him.

The PHARM Division manages the Apiary, Plant Health and Pest Management, Pesticide, Animal Feeds, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime, and Hemp Programs. In overseeing these laws, the Division is tasked with ensuring that farmers, businesses, government, and even homeowners are responsible stewards of the land. Whether it is putting on a training to identify invasive pests or monitoring pesticide applicator exams, the Division is here to educate and regulate the agricultural resource industry.

When not out in the field for work or fun, Dave can be found in West Berlin with his wife, daughter, and dog Willo.



Pictured with Dave is his wife Kate and their daughter Stella

Sifting Through Seed Catalogs

By Andrea Knepper,
University of Vermont Master
Gardener Program

Nothing brightens a dreary winter afternoon like a crisp, colorful seed catalog arriving in the mailbox. The anticipation of sunshine to come and daydreams of a bountiful harvest are welcome during these seasonally short days.

I have been caught up in the excitement and found myself with enough seed packets in my online shopping cart for a small farm, and later found my selections to not be ideal for my garden space or needs. Avoid this by taking some time to get organized and refining your shopping list.

After each gardening season, and before the temptation of seed catalogs calls, it is wise to reflect on your previous year's successes and struggles. Have an idea of what you would like to replicate, what you would like to adjust and any new plants or techniques you'd like to try. If you didn't do this after cleaning out last year's garden, the new year is a perfect time to ponder this and start formulating a plan for the coming year.

If you haven't received any seed catalogs yet this year, check your favorite seed supplier's website. Most have a link where you can request a catalog by mail, download or browse their offerings

online. Look for a local or regional supplier as seeds grown in a similar climate will be more predictable performers in your garden.

For first time gardeners, a great place to start learning about seed companies is your local garden center as they will stock seeds from numerous suppliers. If you find seeds from a particular company appeal to you, visit their website to view, or request, their complete catalog.

Now that you know what you want, as well as what you don't want, it's time to start going through the catalogs. In addition to beautiful photography, stories from growers and recipes, a good seed catalog will include a thorough description of each plant for which seed is available.

Here in Vermont, with our short growing season, it is important to note the days to maturity. For plants that are direct-seeded, meaning the seed goes directly into the ground when temperatures are warm enough, the days to maturity indicates the number of days the seed will take to produce harvestable fruit. For plants that are started indoors and transplanted at the appropriate time, this is the length of time it will take from transplanting to harvest.

To find your frost dates, and determine the length of your growing season, you can search the National Gardening Association's

website (<https://garden.org/apps/frost-dates>).

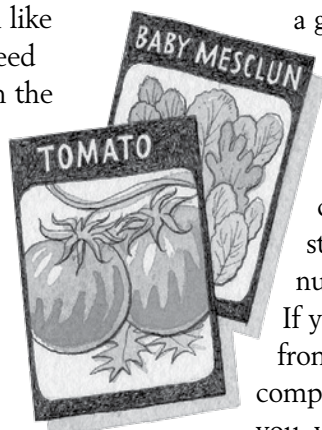
The plant description will tell you if a variety is open-pollinated or a hybrid. Choose open-pollinated if you plan to save your own seed. Hybrid varieties may offer resistance to disease or pests. Sometimes hybrid resistance is noted as a code.

You may need to flip through the catalog to find out what the code means.

Finally, carefully read the listing to see if there are any peculiarities of the variety. Some may be more tolerant to variations in soil conditions while others may need fertilization to maximize yield. Know what each plant

will require before making your final choices.

I also recommend holding onto your seed catalog for the gardening season. Sometimes there are details provided there that are not printed on the seed packet. Having access to your catalog can save you time if the seed packet goes astray.



Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round

Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley
Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
(802) 828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Kaitlin Hayes
Kaitlin.Hayes@vermont.gov
(802) 622-4112

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
(802) 522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated

buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
(802) 461-3814

Phil Wilson
Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
(802) 505-5378

March

Farm To School Vision Grant

Grants for innovative ideas that address emergent farm to school issues

Trevor Lowell
Trevor.Lowell@vermont.gov
(802) 585-9186

April

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

Grants for value-added dairy processors to access professional services to implement marketing tactics, brand improvements, and overall strategy

Kathryn Donovan
Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
(802) 585-4571

May

Farm Agronomic Practices Program

Per-acre payments for conservation practices on Vermont farms and support for one-time water quality educational events or trainings

Nina Gage
Nina.Gage@vermont.gov
(802) 622-4098

Water Quality Work Continues

2021 in Review

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Every year in January the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets delivers a report to the legislature highlighting the efforts that we have made to deliver agricultural water quality results in the past state fiscal year. Here are some highlights from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021, which covers July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021:

◆ **28,700 acres of conservation practices** were implemented under the Field Agronomic Practices Program.

◆ **Over 2.2 million dollars** of Agency funds went out to farmers for engineered projects through the Best Management Practices program. This leveraged close to \$3.5 million in federal funds, with a total cost-share

contribution from Vermont farms of \$690,154.

◆ **27 pieces of conservation equipment** were purchased through the Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP). Equipment purchased under past CEAP grants have implemented **over 57,300 acres of conservation practices since 2018.**

◆ **40 conservation practices** such as fences,

watering tubs, stream crossings and walkways were installed through the Pasture and Surface Water Fencing Program.

◆ Vermont's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program was able to install **35 acres of riparian buffers** and has many more projects lined up for SFY 2022, pending Farm Services Agency approval.

◆ **111 educational events**

were held, reaching **3,097 participants. Over 75%** of those events were held virtually, as the Agency and partners adapted their events to COVID.

◆ **908 farm visits** for technical assistance to farmers were conducted by Agency staff or partners.

◆ Agency staff completed **256 regulatory visits** and inspected a total of **2,512 acres of production area.**

state-funded efforts alone.

None of this work could be possible without the engagement of you, the farmers. Thank you all for your time, effort, and investment in this water quality work. It is incredible to be able to show the legislature and public how much Vermont farmers are doing to play their part in keeping our waterbodies clean.

For more information on the effects of implementation efforts led by the Agency of Agriculture, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/additional-resources-and-reports.

In addition to the work funded by the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and other state agencies, our federal and local partners from across the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership have contributed to outreach, funding, tracking, and reporting on farm water quality reductions across the state. To learn more, visit vtagricleanwater.org

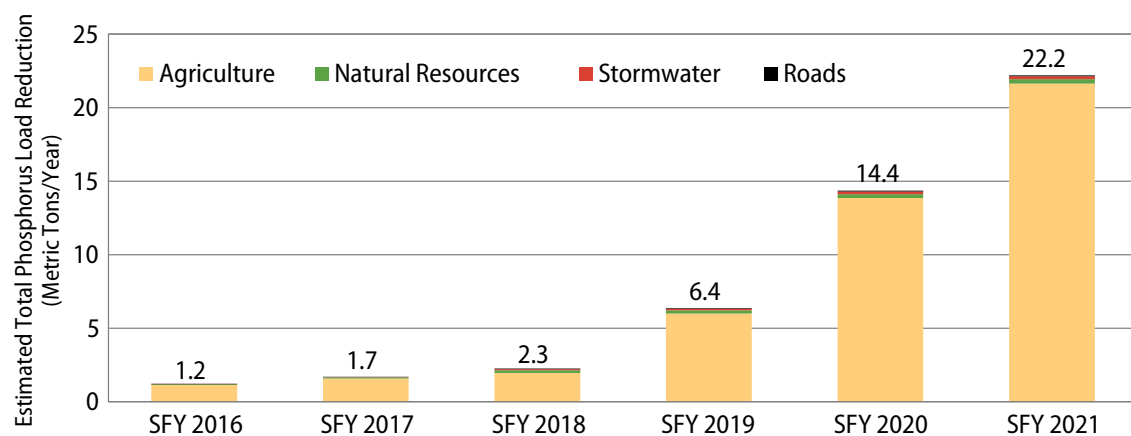


Figure 1: Metric tons of estimated total phosphorus load reduction per fiscal year in the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog basins resulting from state investments in different land use sectors. This figure comes from the 2021 Clean Water Investment Performance Report. To learn more, visit dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/cwi/reports. This figure does not include reductions from Production Area Compliance, which adds an additional 3.3 metric tons from Agriculture in SFY 2021, or from Federally, locally, or farmer-funded projects.

According to Department of Environmental Conservation figures, this implementation has resulted in over 95% of all reported phosphorus reductions in Vermont being attributed to efforts in the agricultural sector for the sixth year in a row.

We have seen the phosphorus reductions from agriculture grow every year since SFY 2016. 21.6 metric tons of P reductions from agriculture were estimated in SFY 2021 in the Lake Memphremagog and Lake Champlain basins from